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Twelfth Biennial Report

OF THE

Bureau of Child and Animal Protection

OF THE

State of Montana

HELENA, MONTANA
1922 - 1924

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Officers of the Bureau

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Secretary.

Lillian S. Cummings,
State Deputy.

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William W. Jones, Court House ..... Havre

Letter of Transmittal

Helena, Montana,
December 15, 1924.

To the Honorable Joseph M. Dixon,
Governor of Montana,
Executive Office,
Helena, Montana.

Dear Sir:

In compliance with the law, the Bureau of Child and Animal Protection has the honor to submit its Biennial Report for the two years ending November 30th, 1924.

Respectfully submitted,

M. L. HIGGINS,
Secretary.

Report of the Bureau of Child and Animal Protection

FOR THE YEARS 1922-1924

The State Bureau of Child and Animal Protection was created by an Act of the Legislature twenty years ago. In the following pages we shall endeavor to given an outline of the work it is doing.

In a general way it has to deal with the youth of the state, although quite often cases are brought to us of domestic differences and of elderly persons who are not getting the help they are entitled too from relatives, so in fact we are a sort of clearing house for troubles, and are glad to relate that by interviews with the parties directly connected we have often been able to adjust without publicity what might have resulted in legal procedure.

Cases of dependent, delinquent, neglected, deserted and destitute children and cases of cruelty to animals come under the supervision of this Bureau.

Montana has fifty-five counties covering 146,997 square miles, these counties are divided into districts and six deputies together with the Secretary cover the entire area.

To the State Deputy, or Placement Officer is assigned the duty of placing children in private homes either for legal adoption or for care and education.

Each case brought to our attention has its own peculiar angles and has to be considered not only from a point of law but from the humane side, what might be the best way to solve the problem of one child, would not be the correct or proper way to handle that of another.

It may be interesting to note that under the former administration during the years, 1918 to 1921, there was expended for the Bureau $69,633.71, while under the present administration, for the years 1921 to 1924, the expenditures were $52,268.94, thus showing a saving during the past three years over the other administration of $17,364.77.

Our cases of cruelty to animals have been greatly reduced since the automobile has replaced the horse as a mode of transportation, on the farms and in the construction work also the big powerful gas machines are seen where a short time ago the horse and mule did the work, plodding along faithfully, if slowly.

Although, as will be seen by our reports and figures, we have been called on to investigate and stop many cases of abuse of animals. Anyone who will wilfully abuse one of God's lowly creatures should be punished severely. We find that as soon as such people are given to understand that animals have the right of protection they usually become more careful and we do not often have a second offense.

That the work of the Bureau is far reaching one will realize, when one stops to consider that the boy and girl of today will be the man and woman of tomorrow, so we must try to guide and direct their foot steps that in the future we will have good, strong and respected citizens.

In 1920 the Legislature cut the appropriation of this department from something over Twenty-four thousand dollars to Ninteen thousand and eighty dollars, again in 1922, they saw fit to make another cut appropriating only Fifteen thousand five hundred and sixty-five dollars for the two years ending June 30, 1925. This greatly retarded the work, the law calls for six deputies at a salary of one hundred and fifty dollars each, per month, besides traveling expenses, therefore, in order to carry on the work and not have a deficit at the end of the two years it was decided to cut off one deputy from the regular roll with the understanding that he would handle any cases that were sent him from this office and would be paid for time spent in so doing; that one deputy be allowed only half time salary, and the other four accept a reduced wage, by mutual consent this program was carried out and we have done very well under those conditions. In many instances the expense of transporting children has been met by the county to which the child belonged some of the work has been referred by letter to the county attorneys in the districts where there are no railroads and where it would mean a heavy expense to send a deputy.

The County Superintendents of Schools and the Executive Secretaries of the Red Cross have been of assistance to us also, and have gladly made the first investigation of a case and reported to us, thus saving the expense of one trip. If we then found a condition such as to warrant further in-

vestigation, the deputy located nearest the point in question was then sent.

The Attorney-General and his staff have very kindly and quickly rendered advice and given decisions on matters presented to them by this office for which I am extremely appreciative. Our work brings us in close touch with the various District Court Judges and the County officials throughout the state and at all times have we been met with the greatest courtesy and I herewith express my gratitude.

Mr. J. V. Hawk, Superintendent of the Montana Children's Home Finding Society has gained my sincere appreciation for his ever ready and willing offers of assistance in our work, as has also the officers of the Parent-Teacher association who have done their share when called on to assist.

Time and opportunity have not availed in the recent months for the Secretary to make personal visits to all of the institutions, but the nature of the work of the Bureau brings us in close touch with these places, and to each and every one, whether a private or a State institution, the Secretary and the deputies are of one voice in saying that we have been received most courteously and that our relations have been most harmonious. I highly commend the efficient work of the heads of these various institutions and homes.

The work of this Bureau is closely allied with that of the Florence Crittenden Home and too much praise cannot be given to the superintendent, Mrs. Lena Cullum. It is here that the homeless girl or the unmarried girl who is about to become a mother finds shelter and loving care during a time when the world turns against her. If after her babe arrives she finds that she is unable to care for it, and is willing, this Bureau then takes legal guardianship of the child and through the Placement Officer a home is found into which the little one is received and adopted. The mother quite often remains at the Home and finds employment and is helped financially and morally by those in charge and when she finally leaves she will have a brighter and better outlook on life. At present there are fifty inmates at the Crittenden Home.

Gladly will I testify to the energetic, loyal and intelligent work performed by the officers of the Department. They have endured hardships in the prosecution of the work and often have been subjected to unjust criticism, but they have ever been faithful and industrious and are deserving of my unstinted praise.

The State Deputy, Mrs. Lillian S. Cummings, has submitted the following report:

November 30, 1924.

Mr. M. L. Higgins, Secretary,
Bureau of Child and Animal Protection,
Helena, Montana.

Dear Sir:

I herewith submit a report of the work of the State Deputy as the child placing and supervising agent of the Bureau of Child and Animal Protection for the biennial period from November 30, 1922 to November 30, 1924.

Children placed in private homes and adopted	151
Returned to parents or other relatives	152
Total	303

Visitations:

Children visited after placement	275
Private homes visited	334

Interviews:

State and County officials	291
Miscellaneous	1,003

Investigations:

Applications for children:

Personal investigation	108
By correspondence	50
Miscellaneous	83
Total	241

Letters written	1,309
Phone calls	971

The figures appear first in this report but they are by no means first in importance in this branch of fundamental child welfare work. The point for emphasis is quality not quantity. What kind of homes have been provided for the children? What kind of citizens are they being developed into? The constructive idea is, how good are the foster homes rather than how many are there. Many of our children have been received and adopted into

some of the best homes in the State, while others have only the ordinary advantages of life. An earnest effort has been made to fit the right child into every home and only a very few have had to be transferred or returned to the State Orphan's Home. There is not the same incentive and enthusiasm to visit children who are already placed or apparently doing well, that there is in making new placements, but your deputy when on a trip of investigation in any place in any certain district makes a special point of visiting all children placed in that territory whether they have been adopted or not.

There is a very apparent economic value in inquiring into new applications and just as great, though not nearly so apparent a value in friendly visits to homes where our children are living and receiving their training for useful manhood and womanhood. Frequent visits of the Placement Officer are very helpful from several standpoints:

(1) For the purpose of establishing friendly relations.

(2) For observing the development of family life, in the homes selected for our children.

(3) In helping to establish and maintain the proper balance between parent and child.

(4) Such visits have a very wholesome restraining influence on all concerned, many times differences that seem rather formidable are adjusted and happier conditions prevail after a visit from a supervisory officer.

Several year's experience demonstrates the fact that the closer supervision exercised over children placed out, the better the result obtained.

Montana has a territory equal to three fair sized Eastern States, but up to this time our law has provided for only one officer whose special duty it is to place and supervise the state children who are in private homes.

This report would not be complete without mention of the kind reception and hospitality extended to your State Deputy in all the homes visited throughout the length and breadth of the state. Some lasting personal friendships have been formed and there exists a real spirit of interest and co-operation in the work of the Bureau.

The general work done by your State Deputy is equal in volume but somewhat different in character to that accomplished in the former biennial period. The work of

the Bureau has been presented to six different organizations as a part of formal programs. A number of girls have been accompanied to the State Vocational School for Girls and some special investigations have been made for the school and for other institutions. Thirty children have been taken to the State Orphan's Home or to foster parents. Several girls needing the care of such an institution have been sent to the Florence Crittenden Home. The greatest economy has been exercised in this department of the work and the effort always made to have one dollar spent for expense represent much more in actual results. In other words the largest volume of work possible has been done on the least amount of money.

It sometimes seems a pity that there is no compulsory education for parents, some are so ignorant while others are so indifferent, and still others so wilfully negligent of the welfare of their own children. Our present day ideals, or lack of them, and present living conditions seem to be responsible for some shocking instances of the desertion of children by their parents. Within the last two years several parents have been cruel enough to leave children absolutely without provision for their care. Others have almost insisted on giving their new born baby to strangers to care for, so the "tourist" parents could proceed on their journey to nowhere in particular in a poor old worn out automobile.

If all our dependent, neglected and abandoned children were under six years of age, we could probably place them all in private homes within a very few weeks or months, because so many good homes are ready to receive some little child. Several childless homes have received two young children of the same family, and older children taken for care and education are placed in the same neighborhood where they can grow up together without losing their family connection.

In placing children, one is often reminded that "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread," but the children must have home both as a humanitarian and an economic measure and arrangements must be made through some human agency, so your State Deputy has gone about this work thoughtfully, prayerfully and most cheerfully as a contribution of service to the homeless and dependent children entrusted to our care. She has endeavored always to worthily personify the helpful and protective powers of the State of Montana, realizing fully that the future of many children depends on what

we of the Bureau of Child and Animal Protection do for them today.

Respectfully yours,

LILLIAN S. CUMMINGS,

State Deputy.

Mrs. Emma A. Ingalls of Kalispell is of the opinion that the work of the Humane officer and of the Juvenile Court is rather hazy to most people, and states that it is based upon the assumption that the child, as a future citizen is at all times the ward of the State and entitled to the protection of the courts that parents or guardians who do not treat their children right may be punished, and if necessary for the future welfare of the child, that it may, by process of law be taken away and placed in an environment where it will have a chance to grow into a good citizen. The purpose being to do something FOR the child, not something TO the child, correction not punishment.

It is comparatively easy to place bright, normal children in homes where they soon make a place for themselves, the problem is what to do with those children not eligible to the Boulder School for Feeble Minded, that come from stocks too feebly endowed by nature with energy and character to take care of themselves and the large families that seem to be the rule with this class.

In Montana we have no law restraining feeble-minded people from marrying and the result of such unions is children crippled mentally, morally and spiritually. This is perhaps the most prolific source of work for humane officers. Besides, the expense of caring for this wreckage takes a large slice of our tax money. Yet to allow children to grow up under destructive conditions and then to punish them because they have become delinquent, is not merely unjust; it is social incompetence and stupidity.

We find many children dwarfed in soul and body for lack of care and nourishment who would respond wonderfully to wholesome living and a happy environment. Then we see the other side of the picture many childless homes where these little waifs would give as much as they would receive if the childless ones would only have faith in the power of love and a home, to work the miracle of progress in the child handicapped by heredity. The human plant like a tree must have conditions favorable to growth.

Institutional life cannot take the place of a home in assisting children to develop the best that is in them. It necessarily is too mechanical and stunts the emotional life. Thus one of the most gratifying trends of the Bureau work is the systematic effort to place children when possible in private homes. The advantage to the child is positive. It will more easily find openings for self support where it grows up in full acquaintance with the neighborhood life and its resources, and will develop more initiative and self reliance. I have had

many requests for assistance from other States and have also received many favors from officers of outside States when I have had to send children to friends and they were compelled to travel alone.

In closing I will say that Child Welfare in the last analysis becomes a question of intelligently applied eugenics, and a government that does not care for its future citizens must later pay for it in a more expensive way by supporting them in reformatories and penitentiaries.

Mr. F. P. Collins of Billings gives a summary of the work done in his district and includes the important cases, or the ones which required attention either of the District Court or that were settled otherwise to the benefit of the children. Many cases were reported and required time for investigation and then proved to be without foundation, no report was made on them.

Quoting from his report: "At times it seemed that one could only touch the high spots of the work that was to be done in so large a district. Personally, I have become very much interested in Juvenile work and believe that there is not enough interest taken in the welfare of our growing generation; there is too much inclination on the part of citizens and parents and sometimes even officials to pass these matters up lightly. We should have an ironclad law holding the parent or guardian responsible for dependents and delinquents, thereby relieving the State and counties of the burden of caring for and supporting the children of parents who are living, yet who are adjudged unfit or incompetent to rear them. As it is now, public funds are being drained and public institutions filled with the children of parents who should be compelled to furnish the funds for the support of their offspring.

"From November 30th, 1922, to November 30, 1924, I have investigated 382 delinquent cases and 493 children who were considered dependent, or a total of 875 children. Of this number 28 were committed to the Boys' Industrial School at Miles City; 14 to the Girls' Vocational Training School at Helena; 21 to the State Orphan's Home at Twin Bridges; 26 to the Bureau of Child and Animal Protection; 8 to the Florence Crittenden Home at Helena; 5 to the School for Feeble Minded at Boulder; 4 to the School for the Deaf and Blind at Boulder; 18 sent out of the State to relatives and friends; 1 to the House of Good Shepherd at Helena; 1 to the Montana Children's Home Finding Society, and 2 remain wards of the District Court.

"About 63 cases of neglect and abuse of dumb animals were investigated, aggregating several thousand head of stock, several cases comprising large flocks and herds. In a number of instances animals were killed, it appearing that there was nothing else to do but put them out of their misery, here I might mention that a change in our statutes would not come amiss, and the Colorado law be adopted thus giving the Bureau authority to take up and care for neglected stock.

"In most instances I have had the hearty support and co-operation of the county officials in my district and the past two years I shall look back upon, not only with a feeling of service to the community but with pride and appreciation for those with whom I have worked in this Bureau."

From Paul A. Ozanne, the deputy covering the Butte district, we have received the following:—

My Dear Mr. Higgins:

"You have requested a brief summary of the activities of the Butte distrcit of the Bureau, covering the fiscal period ending November 30th, 1924. I am not unmindful that a more extensive recital of operations in general is not within the limits of your report, or the alloted space of your department.

"Because of the complexity of Butte's population and its incongruous customs, habits and temperament, the demands upon the "Humane Officer" are at once varied and trying and his activities and experiences are replete with acute conditions, some of which beggar description.

"While a constant warfare is waged against the vicious and cowardly who offend against childhood, many obstacles are met, with which it is very difficult to contend.

"It is my candid belief, after four years of active service in this department, that the most potent factor contributing to the necessity of rescuing children from intolerable conditions and vicious surroundings, who, by reason of age, are unable to protect themselves, is the delinquency of parents—shiftless and indifferent parents—whose own neglect brings about conditions and circumstances making commitment to institutional care an absolute requisite.

"I am free to confess that in many families investigated, I have found the crying need for a rehabilitation of the home, and the establishment of a proper sense of responsibility for the protection of the children's heritage.

"Against those who violate childhood, a system of relentless prosecution is demanded, and they should, in every instance, be brought summarily to justice.

"Estrangement between husband and wife, excessive indulgence in intoxicants, the deadly narcotic, as alike desertion and abandonment on the part of either parent, have contributed their quota, yea, even their full measure to the pitiful experiences of children. It would seem that once the deserting parent is outside the confines of our State, he or she, apparently is immune from punishment. This is a condition which should not obtain. Prompted by the spirit of human sympathy, the laws governing child protection should be made more stringent, or their enforcement more efficacious, to the end that much of the abuse, neglect, cruelty, destitution, desertion, abandonment, improper guardianship, delinquency and kindred violations of child welfare will be minimized.

"Instances of actual cruelty to animals in this community are not of frequent occurence, and when committed, is generally by thoughtless and mischievous juveniles."

SUMMARY OF THE WORK FOR THE YEARS 1922-1924.

We recommend the careful and thoughtful perusal of the following:

Dependent Children.

Investigations	2176
Sent to State Orphan's Home	129
Sent to Private Orphan's Home	58
Committed to the Bureau	159
Placed in Private Homes and Adopted	462
Returned to Parents or Other Relatives	152
Sent Out of the State	135
Mother's Pensions	69
County Aid Secured for	374

Delinquent Children.

Number of Children Investigated	613
Sent to State Industrial School	35
Sent to Vocational School for Girls	31
Sent to the Crittenden Home	38
Placed in Private Homes	39
Sent to the House of Good Shepherd	9
Paroled	63
Sent Out of the State	26
Other Dispositions	66

Defective Children.

Number Children Investigated	158
Sent to Boulder	23
Sent to Warm Springs	6

Other Investigations.

Number Children Destitute	322
Number Children Neglected	522
Number Children Deserted	188
Number Children Truant	58
Cruelty to Children	43
Immorality of Parents	39
Non-Support of Children	67
Statutory Rape	41
Incest	2
Cuelty to Animals	565
Number of Animals Killed	81

Prosecutions.

Cruelty to Children	13
Immorality of Parents	16
Non-Support and Desertion of Children	28
Statutory Rape	28
Incest	1
Cruelty to Animals	6

Convictions.

Cruelty to Children	8
Immorality of Parents	3
Non-Support and Desertion of Parents	11
Statutory Rape	6
Cuelty to Animals	1

Cases Pending in Court.

Cruelty to Children	3
Immorality of Parents	2
Non-Support and Desertion	8
Statutory Rape	16
Cruelty to Animals	2

Marriages.

Marriages	15